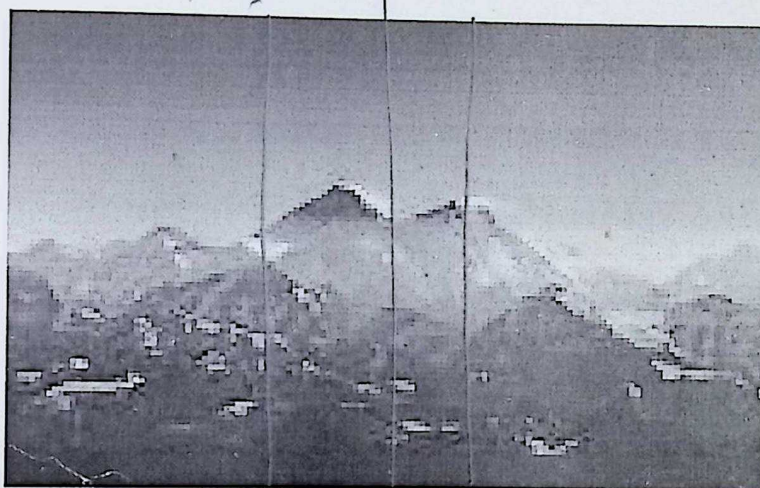


Nepal Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management
Rabibhawan, Kathmandu

**A REPORT ON
MAJOR TOURISM PRODUCT
OF NEPAL.**



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About Nepal

Nepal, home to Mount Everest, is dominated by the world's most imposing mountains. Although the country is relatively small (147,181 square kilometers), 80 percent of its territory is occupied by the dramatic peaks of the **Himalayas**. Nepal was closed to foreign visitors until 1951, a situation which contributed greatly to its mystique in the west. This small, hospitable country has since become an exceptionally popular destination for travelers, whether they are in search of climbing challenges or spiritual enlightenment.

Nepal can be divided into three geographical regions, each stretching from east to west across the country. The southernmost strip of land, the Terai, is bordered to the north by Himalayan foothills and to the south by the Ganges River. The area was originally covered with tropical vegetation, but has been almost completely converted to agricultural production. The Terai is now the breadbasket of Nepal and is covered with farms.

The central section of Nepal is formed by the Mahabharat Chain, a range of mountains that reach modest altitudes of 2,000-3,000 meters. Farming has become an important activity in the area; terraced farms produce rice, corn and wheat. The Kathmandu Valley, a stretch of green in the middle of the Mahabharat, is home to Nepal's capital and other historic cities.

The Himalayas stretch across the northern section of Nepal. Eight of the ten highest peaks in the world are located here, and most are covered with permanent snowfields. The area is sparsely populated, with little vegetation above the tree-line (4,200 meters).

The climate varies considerably with elevation. May to October is monsoon season, when rain soaks the Terai and snow falls on the Himalayan peaks. Mid-October to mid-December is prime mountaineering weather: the skies are clear and sunny, temperatures range from warm in the lowlands to crisp in the mountains. March and April are also good months for mountain treks, although temperatures in Kathmandu and the Terai tend to be steamy.

History and People

While there is evidence that Nepal was inhabited in prehistoric times, there has been little archeological research on early indigenous peoples. In the 8th century BC, migrants from India settled in the region of Kathmandu. Indian influence in the region was further consolidated by the Licchavi Dynasty (300-900 AM), who introduced Hindu traditions and culture (including the caste system). By the 13th century, three kingdoms, all under the control of the Malla Dynasty, dominated the Kathmandu Valley. Over the next five hundred years, the Malla rulers proved to be important patrons of the arts, building elaborately-decorated temples and palaces that survive to this day. Throughout the centuries, Nepal's topography protected the country from outside invaders. The

Himalayas provided an impenetrable boundary to the north, while endemic malaria in the Terai kept out attacks from the south.

Nepal's kingdoms were unified in 1769 by Prithvi Narayan Shah, an ancestor of Nepal's present-day king. Inspired by India's independence, a nationalist movement grew in Nepal in the 1940's, but the king remained in control of the country. It was not until 1991 that a new constitution was introduced and multiparty elections were held for the first time.

Nepal's 18 million inhabitants belong to dozens of different ethnic groups. They can be divided roughly into Hindu peoples (who live mainly in the lowlands) and Buddhists, who live in mountain villages close to Tibet. Hindus, who make up 90 percent of the population, dominate political and religious life. But Buddhism has a special connection to Nepal: Siddhartha Gautama, who was later revered as the Buddha, was born in the Terai in 543 BC. Perhaps the most well-known Buddhist ethnic group are the Sherpa, who have long been associated with Himalayan mountaineering expeditions. The vast majority of Nepal's population makes a living from subsistence agriculture.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

The World Heritage List includes 830 properties forming part of the cultural and natural heritage which the World Heritage Committee considers as having outstanding universal value.

These include 644 cultural, 162 natural and 24 mixed properties. Out of these 10 sites are from Nepal itself. Seven out of these are cultural and two natural.

The small mountain kingdom of Nepal is blessed with such astonishing and unique sites that within the area of 140,800 sq km Nepal holds a considerably high number of places recognised by UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation) as 'World Heritage Sites'. There are altogether ten World Heritage Sites in Nepal, seven of which are in Kathmandu itself. The list includes both natural as well as cultural sites.

Cultural Sites

The cultural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley is illustrated by seven groups of monuments and buildings which display the full range of historic and artistic achievements for which the Kathmandu Valley is world famous. The seven sites include the Durbar Squares of Hanuman Dhoka (Kathmandu), Patan and Bhaktapur, the Buddhist stupas of Swayambhu and Boudhanath, and the Hindu temples of Pashupati and Changu Narayan. Click on the following links to get detailed information about the individual sites.

» Kathmandu Durbar Square

» Patan Durbar Square

» Bhaktapur Durbar Square

» Changu Narayan Temple

» Swayambhunath Stupa

» Pashupatinath Temple

» Lumbini

» Boudhanath Stupa

Natural Sites

Nepal's national parks included in the World Heritage Sites List are exceptional areas with dramatic mountains, glaciers, deep valleys and undisturbed vestiges of the 'Terai' region. Several rare species, such as the snow leopard, lesser panda, single-horned Asiatic rhinoceros and the Bengal tiger are found in these park.

» Chitwan National Park

» Sagarmatha National Park

Kathmandu Durbar Square:

Listed as one of the eight Cultural World Heritage site by UNESCO, Kathmandu Durbar Square is a cluster of ancient temples, palaces, courtyards and streets that date back to the 12th and 18th centuries. The square is known to be the social, religious and urban focal point of the Capital City.

The Palace Complex was the royal Nepalese residence until the 19th century and is the site of important ceremonies, such as the coronation of the Nepalese monarch. The palace is decorated with elaborately-carved wooden windows and panels an. It houses the King Tribhuwan Memorial Museum and the Mahendra Museum.

Major Attractions

Taleju Temple

The temple is a famous Hindu and Jain religious site. The three-tiered temple is the first to be erected with more than two roofs and raised on a tall stepped platform. It is said that the mandir was built in the shape of a yantra on the advice of the Taleju Goddess herself and that she appeared to the King at the dedication ceremony disguised as a bee.

Mahendreshvara Temple

The simple yet beautiful temple was built by King Mahendra Malla and is dedicated to the Hindu Lord Shiva in the form of Pashupati. The temple was destroyed in a 1934 earthquake and rebuilt thereafter. The temple is a memorial to its founder.

Jgannath Temple

The Jagannath Temple is recognized as the finest of the group near Hanuman Dhoka. Exquisite wood-carvings embellish the doors, windows and roof struts, depicting a

panoply of gods from the Hindu pantheon. Originally dedicated to Vishnu the shrine was later re-dedicated to Jagannath.

Degutale Temple

The temple was built by Shivasimha Malla honoring the Mallas' family deity, Degutale. It resembles Taleju's shrine but with a tower-like base in place of the stepped platform. The worship of Degutale has its origins in a nature cult, the images being pieces of rock which the Newaris set up and worshipped.

Hanuman Dhoka

Palace facade turns at right angles between the Degutale Temple and the Taleju Mandir. This way is created Hanuman Dhoka (Hanuman is a monkey god). Hanuman idol placed in the dhoka has been anointed with mustard oil and vermilion through the centuries.

Nasal Chowk

Nasal Chowk takes its name from the little statue of the dancing Krishna in the shrine on the east side of the court. In Malla times the podium in the center of the court was used for dancing displays. The Shah kings chose to be crowned in Nasal Chowk, a tradition which continues today.

Mul Chowk

As the occasional abode of the goddess Taleju, the court is barred to visitors, though it is often possible to peep in through the gate and have a look at the exquisite beauty of the palace. The Chowk is opened to Hindus once a year when, on the ninth day of the Dasain Festival, hundreds of buffaloes and goats are sacrificed to the goddess.

Bhandarkal

Bhandarkal is a botanical garden created by King Pratap Mall in the mid 17th century. With its diverse flora, Bhandarkal is a treat for nature lovers and ecologists. The garden has been named after a seven-storied palace that possesses a statue of the Sleeping Vishnu, Jalashayana Narayan.

Vilar Temple

Between the Lalitpur and Basantpur Towers can be seen the magnificently carved façade of the three-storied Vilas Mandir, of a richness truly befitting a Temple of Luxury.

Trailokya Mohan Narayan Temple

The three storied temple has the figure of Garuda placed in its front and incarnations of Lord Vishnu within the temple. It was built by Prithvi Bendra Malla in 1680.

Shiva Temple

The Shiva Temple in Darbar Square is a replica of the Jaisi Deval and was built by Riddhi Lakshmi in 1690.

Shiv Parvati Temple

The long low building on the northern side of Durbar Square contains the beautiful shrines of Shiva and Parvati. This somewhat unusual building is believed to date from the time of Bahadur Shah. It is probably a reconstruction, the stepped platform on which it stands being considerably older than the temple itself.

Manju Deval

Dedicated to Shiva the large three-storied Manju Deval on its unusually high stepped base seems to dominate Durbar Square. It was built in 1692 by the mother of Bhupatindra Malla of Bhaktapur. Inside the temple there is a Shiva lingam. The small shikhara (temple tower in the North Indian style) at the foot of the steps honors Kam Dev, Shiva's shakti.

Kumari Bahal

The house of the Living Goddess, the Kumari Bahal looks like the monastery that was constructed in 1757 by Jaya Prakash Malla. Inside it lives the young girl who is selected to be the town's living goddess, until she reaches her first puberty and reverts to being a normal mortal.

Kasthamandapa

Kasthamandap or house of wood is the building which gave Kathmandu its name. Legend narrates that the whole building is constructed from a Single Sal tree. At first it was a community hall where local people gathered for important ceremonies but later it was converted to a Temple of Gorakhnath. The image of Gorakhnath glitters at the center of the building.

Ashok Binayak

Ashok Binayak Shrine is the principle shrine of Lord Ganesha in the Kathmandu Valley. The stone image of Lord Ganesha stands beneath a golden replica of the Ashok tree which once shaded the shrine and eventually gave it its name.

Simha Sattal

Located at the southern end of the Kathmandu Durbar Square. The residential style temple contains the Garuda Narayan figure, strange looking effigies and a little shrine of Harikrishna.

Patan Durbar Square:

Patan Durbar Square complex, situated in the center of Patan city, also known as Lalitpur, houses the residence of the former Patan royal family. Patan Square and its surroundings are good specimen of ancient Newari architecture. There are three main courtyards in the palace: Mul Chowk, Sundari Chowk and Keshav Narayan Chowk. Mul Chowk, the oldest one, is at the centre of Patan square.

Several multi-sized and multi-styled temples occupy the western part of the complex. Main among these are Krishna Temple, Bhimsen Temple and the Golden Temple of Hiranya Varna.

Chowks

Mul Chowk

This is the most famous and one of the largest courtyards among three main chowks. Bidya Temple is located at the center of the courtyard and the Taleju temples stand around the courtyard.

Sundari Chowk

Sundari Chowk is to the south of the Mul Chowk with its sunken tank known as Tusha Hiti Mul Chowk & Taleju Temple.

Keshav Narayan Chowk

Keshav Narayan Chowk is towards the northern part. Dominating Degutale temple is next to it. It is the site of the earliest Malla palace in Patan. The Chowk sits on the older foundations of a Buddhist monastery.

Places To Visit

Krishna Temple

This temple of red stone, dedicated to Hindu Lord Krishna was erected in the 17th century. The temple is considered to be the first one to be constructed in Shikara architecture. Thanks to this attribute, it holds a commanding position in the durbar square. The elegant shikhara-style temple is ranked as one of the gems of Durbar Square. The temple is compared with sacred Mount Meru, which is abode of the god Shiva according to Hindu scriptures.

Mahaboudha

Buddhist temple Mahaboudha, which is made of clay bricks, lies to the east of the Durbar Square. Hundreds of Buddha images are engraved in the bricks. The temple is known for its fine terra cotta work.

Kumbheshwor

The five-storied pagoda-style Lord Siva temple was constructed by King Jayasthiti Malla. Inside the temple is a natural spring whose source, is said to be the famous glacial lake of Gosainkunda. The golden work was added later in 1422 A.D. One the festival of Janai Purnima, ritual bathing takes place and a fair is also held.

Jagat narayan Temple

Jagatnarayan temple is a tall shikhara style temple devoted to Lord Vishnu. Red bricks are used for the construction of the temple. The temple also holds a fine metal statue of Garuda, Ganesh and Hanuman, all related to Hindu religion and mythology.

1.) दिन्नमस्ता मन्त्र
श्रीं ह्रीं क्लीं ऐं
वज्रवैरोचनीये हुं हुं कट् स्वाहा ।

Rudra Varna Mahavihar

This Buddhist monastery holds amazing collection of images and idols in metal, stone and wood. Legend holds that the Kings in the ancient times were crowned in this monastery. Many of the treasures offered by the people can be seen here even today.

The Ashokan Stupas

Indian Emperor Ashoka visited Nepal in 250 B.C and constructed four ancient stupas at the four corners of Patan. The four stupas are located in Pulchowk, Lagankhel, Ebahi and in Teta (way to Sano Gaon) respectively.

Bhaktapur Durbar Square is an assortment of pagoda and shikhara-style temples grouped around a fifty-five-window palace of brick and wood. The square is part of a charming valley as it highlights the idols of ancient kings perched on top of stone monoliths, the guardian deities looking out from their sanctuaries, the wood carvings in every place - struts, lintels, tympanums, gateways and windows - all seem to form a well orchestrated symphony.

Places to Visit

The Lion Gate

The massive gate that dates back to 1696 AD is guarded by two huge statues of lions at the either sides. The dreadful stone image of Lord Shiva and the fearful image of Ugrachandi attract the tourists from far off.

The Golden Gate (Sun Dhoka)

The Golden gate is said to be the most beautiful and richly moulded specimen of its kind in the entire world. The door is embellished with monsters and mythical creatures of marvellous intricacy. The Golden Gate was erected by King Ranjit Malla and is the entrance to the main courtyard of the Palace of fifty-five windows.

The Palace of Fifty Five Windows

Keshav Narayan Chowk is the Northern-most part of the Patan Darbar palace complex, with the dominating Degutale temple next to it. This magnificent palace was built during the reign of King Yakshay Malla in AD 1427 and was subsequently remodeled by King Bhupatindra Malla in the seventeenth century. Among the brick walls with their gracious setting and sculptural design, is a balcony with fifty-five Windows, considered a unique masterpiece of woodcarving.

The Art Gallery

The Art Gallery contains ancient paintings belonging to the Hindu and Buddhist traditions of various periods and descriptions. The gallery is particularly famous among researchers on Hinduism and Buddhism.

The Statue of King Bhupatindra Malla

This statue depicts King Bhupendra Malla in the act of worship and is located on a column facing the palace. This is considered the most magnificent statue among the many statues in the squares.

Nyatapola

This is the most famous pagoda of Nepal, which was built in 1702 A.D by Bhupatendra Mala. This temple was dedicated to Siddhilaxmi, the tantric mother goddess of supreme power. Nyatapola in Newari means a five tiered symbolizing five basic elements - water, earth, fire, wind and sky.

Pashupati Temple

According to a folklore, a Bhaktapur native who was a great devotee of Lord Pashupati, had a dream in which lord Shiva told him to build a temple for him so that he could move into it. He obeyed this command and thus the temple came into existence.

Vatsala Temple

This 17th century stone temple, dedicated to a mother goddess, is full of intricate works on stone.

Changu Narayan

Changu Narayan Temple, the oldest temple in Kathmandu valley came in existence in 4th century. The temple is adorned by some of the best specimen of stone, wood, and metal craft in the valley. The temple stands as the epitome of culture, religion, history and faith of the Kathmandu valley.

Historical Importance

- It is the oldest temple in Kathmandu valley.
- A Vishnu idol with ten heads and ten arms is a fine example of stone carving from the 5th century.
- The temple is of great importance due to its idols and shrines having rich architectural beauty.

Places to be Seen

- Garuda Narayana Temple
- Shrine of King Bhupalendra Malla and his mother
- Krishna Shrine
- Nateshvara Shrine
- Sculpture of Sri Mahadev
- Sculpture of Garuda
- Shrine of Somalingeshvara
- Sculptures: Vishnu, Durga Avalokitesvara and Garuda Ganesh
- Ganesh Shrine
- Bhagvati Temple
- Vishnu Vikranta
- Vishnu Vishvarupa
- Lakshmi Temple Shiva Temple
- Stone Column

Legendary places in the temple

Garuda Idol

Inside the Changunarayan temple is a esteemed figure of Garuda. The statue is offered sweets by the devotees every year on Nag Panchami. This is done in remembrance of the epic struggle with the great snake Taksaka. The drops of moisture, believed to be effective against diseases such as leprosy and ulcers, are collected by the priests.

King Bhupendra Malla Statues

Statues of King Bhupalendra Malla of Kathmandu and his mother can also be seen in a shrine. Bloody fighting characterised their politics during the 17th century but both were generous when it came to revering the gods.

Vishnu Sculpture

To the north of the temple is a sculpture of Lord Vishnu seated on Garuda (Garudasana Vishnu). This image appears on the Nepalese 10 rupee note. Vishnu sculpture dates back to 9th century.

Important Vishnu Sculptures

Vishwaroop

Vishwaroop sculpture, dating back to 8th century A.D., presents Lord Vishnu in his universal form.

Vishnu Vikrant

The stone idol, harking back to the 8th century A.D, is of the most powerful form of Lord Vishnu. It is related to the Hindu legend of Vaman, an incarnation of Vishnu, who measured space with feet.

Vishnu Riding Garuda

This figure of Vishnu mounting Garuda, the mythical bird, dates back to the 10th century A.D.

Narsimhha Vishnu

This form of Lord Vishnu, the Narsimha, is in half human and half lion form.

How to Reach

Take a taxi from Bhaktapur to reach Changu Narayan temple. The drive would be of approximately 30 minutes.

The Buddhist temple of Swayambhunath, situated on the top of a hill, west of Kathmandu, is one of the most popular, holy and instantly recognizable symbols of Nepal. The temple is colloquially known as the 'monkey temple' because of the large tribe of roving monkeys who guard the temple.

Major Attractions

The Stupa

Swayambhunath Stupa is a golden spire crowning a conical wooded hill. It is the most ancient and enigmatic of all the holy shrines in Kathmandu Valley. It has a lofty white dome and a glittering golden spire that are visible from all sides of the valley. Historical records found on a stone inscription give evidence that the stupa was already an important Buddhist pilgrimage destination by the 5th century A.D. i.e. before the coming of Buddhism in the valley.

Area Surrounding The Stupa

The surroundings of Swyambhunarayan Stupa consists of chaityas, temples, painted images of deities and numerous other religious objects.

Harati Temple

The temple is dedicated to the goddess of smallpox and other epidemics. The presence of the Harati Devi temple signifies the intermingling of the pantheons of Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal.

Palace Of Peace

Atop Syambunath hill is another fascinating, though less visited temple, Shantipur, popularly known as the 'Palace of Peace'. It is said that inside the secret underground chamber of the temple lives the 8th century Tantric master, Shantikar Acharya. The master, it is believed, has lived through centuries and has full control on the weather and the King of Kathmandu must go to him in times of drought.

Architecture

Amazing to look at, the architectural beauty of Swayambunath Temple gives way to the feelings of reverence and adoration. The stupa consists of a dome at the base and a cubical structure with eyes of Buddha looking in all the four directions. There are pentagonal Toran present above each of the four sides with statues engraved in them. Behind and above the torana there are thirteen tiers. Above all the tiers, there is a small space above which the Gajur is present.

Mythology

According to Swayambhu Puran, the entire Kathmandu valley was once filled with an enormous lake, out of which grew a mystical Lotus. The valley came to be known as Swayambhu, meaning 'Self-Created' or 'Self-Existent'. The Bodhistava Manjushri had a vision of the lotus at Swayambhu and traveled there to worship it. In order to make the site more accessible to human pilgrims, Manjushri cut a gorge through the mountains surrounding the valley. The water drained out of the lake, leaving the valley in which Kathmandu now lies. The lotus was transformed into a hill and the flower become the Swayambhunath stupa.

Symbology

The dome at the base represents the entire world. When a person gets free (represented by eyes of mercy and self knowledge) from the bonds of the world, the person reaches the state a bit higher. After that, the person has to cross thirteen stages represented by the tiers before attaining Nirvana (salvation).

How To Reach

There are two ways to reach the top of the monkey temple: the first and the most common is to get there with a car but the most beautiful way to reach the top of this amazing temple is to climb the 365 stairs of the temple.

Pashupatinath Temple

Pashupatinath Temple, with its astonishing architectural beauty, stands as a symbol of faith, religion, culture and tradition. Regarded as the most sacred temple of Hindu Lord Shiva in the world, Pashupatinath Temple's existence dates back to 400 A.D. The richly-ornamented pagoda houses the sacred linga or phallic symbol of Lord Shiva. Thousands of pilgrims from all over the world come to pay homage to this temple, that is also known as 'The Temple of Living Beings'.

What to See

- » Gold-painted images of guardian deities
- » Chaturmukha (four-faced statue)
- » Chadeshvar, an inscribed Licchavi linga from the 7th century
- » Brahma Temple
- » Dharmashila, a stone where sacred oaths are taken
- » Arya Ghat
- » Gauri Ghat (holy bath)
- » Pandra Shivalaya (15 shrines)
- » Gorakhnath and Vishwarup Temples
- » Guhyeshwari (Guhjeshwari) Temple
- » Kirateshwar Mahadeva Mandir and Surya Ghat

Architecture

- » The two level roofs of the temple are embellished with gold and the four main doors are adorned with silver.
- » The temple is famous for its awe-inspiring and astounding pagoda architecture.
- » The western door has a statue of a large Bull, Nandi, is ornamented in gold. This black stone idol, about 6 ft in height and circumference, adds to the beauty and charisma of the temple.
- » The present architectural nature of Pashupatinath temple came into existence as a result of renovation by Queen Gangadevi during the reign of Shivasimha Malla (1578-1620 AD).

Legends

There are many legends describing as to how the temple of Lord Pashupatinath came to existence here. Some of them are narrated below:-

The Cow Legend

Legend says that Lord Shiva once took the form of an antelope and sported unknown in the forest on Bagmati river's east bank. The gods later caught up with him, and grabbing him by the horn, forced him to resume his divine form. The broken horn was worshipped as a linga but overtime it was buried and lost. Centuries later an astonished herdsman found one of his cows showering the earth with milk. Digging deep at the site, he discovered the divine linga of Pashupatinath.

The Linchchavi Legend

According to Gopalraj Vamsavali, the oldest ever chronicle in Nepal, this temple was built by Supus Padeva, a Linchchavi King, who according to the stone inscription erected by Jayadeva 11 in the courtyard of Pashupatinath in 753 AD, happened to be the ruler 39 generations before Manadeva (464-505 AD).

The Devalaya Legend

Another chronicle states that Pashupatinath Temple was in the form of Linga shaped Devalaya before Supus Padeva constructed a five storey temple of Pashupatinath in this place. As the time passed, the need for repairing and renovating this temple arose. It is learnt that this temple was reconstructed by a mediaeval King named Shivadeva (1099-1126 AD). It was renovated by Ananta Malla adding a roof to it.

Festivals

Pashupati area is regarded as one of the most important places of pilgrimages for the followers of Hinduism. Thousands of devotees from within and outside the country come to pay homage to Pashupatinath every day. And on special occasions like Ekadasi, Sankranti, Mahashivratri, Teej Akshaya, Rakshabandhan, Grahana (eclipse), Poornima (Full moon day) the whole atmosphere turns festive and mirthful as people congregate here in a far greater number.

During the Shivaratri (also spelled Shivratri) festival Pashupatinath temple is lit with ghee lamps throughout the night and the temple remains open all night. Thousands of devotees take ritual baths in the Bagmati river on the day of the festival and observe a fast for the whole day. Hundreds of sadhus (sages) from different parts of Nepal and India come here on the occasion of Maha Shivaratri.

Auspicious Days to Visit

In August, during the Teej festival, thousands of women visit the temple to bathe in the holy waters of the Bagmati River. Because this ritual is meant to bring a long and happy marriage, many women dress in red saris, which are traditionally worn for wedding ceremonies. Full moon and New moon days are also considered auspicious to visit the

temple.

Good to know

According to a legend recorded in local texts, especially the *Nepalamahatmya* and the *Himavatkhanda*, the Hindu Lord Shiva once fled from the other gods in Varanasi to Mrigasthali, the forest on the opposite bank of the Bagmati River from the temple. There, in the form of a gazelle, he slept with his consort Parvati. When the gods discovered him there and tried to bring him back to Varanasi, he leapt across the river to the opposite bank, where one of his horns broke into four pieces. After this, Shiva became manifest as Pashupati (Lord of Animals) in a four-face (chaturmukha) linga.

How to Reach

There are regular bus services from Kathmandu (from Ratna Park or City Bus Station) to Patan,. It takes approximately 45 minutes to reach Goshala, the stop for Pashupatinath. Battery-operated Safaa tempos depart from near the Ratna Park office in Kathmandu and drops the pilgrims at Ring Road, west of Pashupatinath. Thereafter, a tempo going to Chabahil or Bodhnath can be hired.

Boudhanath

The awesome structure of Bouddhanath is indeed inspiring. The 36-meter-high stupa of Bouddhanath is one of the largest stupas in South Asia. With countless monasteries surrounding it, Bouddhanath is the center of Changunarayan

Perched on a hill and visible from miles around, the Changu Narayan temple stands majestically above the rice fields of Bhaktapur. Dedicated to Vishnu, the Preserver the temple's origins go back to the 4th century. A fifth century stone inscription in the temple proclaims it as one of the oldest shrines of the Kathmandu Valley. The temple is a showcase for Newari art and architecture of the early century. The stone, wood, and metal craft found here are exemplary.

On the struts of the two-tiered Changu Narayan Temple, are ten incarnations of Narayan. And a 6th Century stone statue shows the cosmic form of Vishnu. Garuda, half man and half bird, is the vehicle of Vishnu, and his life-size statue kneels before the temple.

Some important sculptures of Vishnu seen here are:

Vishwaroop:

This highly valued sculpture represents Vishnu in his most universal form. It dates back to 8th century A.D.

Vishnu Vikranta:

This stone image, dating back to the 8th century A.D., is one of the most powerful forms of Vishnu. This is when he measured space with his feet.

Vishnu riding on the Garuda (the mythical bird) - this figure of Vishnu mounting Garuda dates back to the 10th Century A.D.

Narsimha Vishnu - this form of Vishnu is seen in his half man and half lion form. The stone inscription (dated 464 A.D.) placed in front of the Changu Narayan temple describes in detail the story of:

Dharmadeva, a Nepalese King who died suddenly, with his young son succeeding him to the throne. It is said that later the son after a series of victories in war inscribed the victory on a stone pillar and placed it in front of the Changu Narayan temple. It is written in verse and in an academic Sanskrit which is akin to an encyclopedia about the society of the time, its tradition and culture. It starts with an invocation to the Vishnu of Doladri proving that Changu Narayan or the Doladri Narayan is much older than the date on the inscription of 464 A.D.

Tibetan Buddhism in Nepal. Built in the shape of a mandala designed to replicate the Gyangtse of Tibet, the stupa was renovated by Licchavi rulers in the 8th Century. The location of the stupa is interesting as it once lay on the ancient trade route to Tibet and it was here that Tibetan merchants rested and offered prayers for centuries. Boudha even today has a strong Tibetan presence as countless Tibetan refugees found a home around the stupa. On top is the harmika and on each side are painted the all seeing eyes of the Buddha symbolizing awareness. The canopy has thirteen stages. At ground level there is a brick wall with 147 niches and 108 images of the meditational buddha inset behind copper prayer wheels.

Lumbini

Lumbini associated with the birth of Lord Buddha is of immense archeological and religious importance and also a UNESCO Cultural Heritage Site. It is said that Prince Siddhartha Gautam, who later became Buddha the 'Enlightened One', was born in the gardens of Nepal's Lumbini in 623 B.C. The main shrines of Lumbini are the newly restored Mayadevi Temple, the Ashokan Pillar behind the temple and the Lake Shakya Puskarini where Mayadevi is said to have bathed before delivering the little Buddha into the world.

Several other places near Lumbini are linked with stories connected to Buddha and Buddhism. Lumbini is about 300 kilometers south-west of Kathmandu. Buses and flights to Bhairawa which is about 22 kilometers from Lumbini, are available from major cities. From Bhairawa transport services to Lumbini are easily available. There are sufficient hotels and restaurants in Lumbini and Bhairawa.

Some important monuments to see in this area:

The Lumbini Garden - This is the site marked by a stone pillar (Ashoka Pillar) erected by the Indian Emperpr Ashoka at about 245B.C. The most important discovery in this place is a stone marked to suggest the exact birthplace of Buddha.

Mayadevi Temple - This temple dedicated to the mother of Lord Buddha, Maya Devi, was excavated a few years ago. Many sculptures and carving in which the figures and designs are only slightly projecting from their background are seen here.

Lumbini has many new monasteries and stupas built by Buddhist communities from around the world. Besides the Nepal Buddha Temple and the Dharmaswami Buddhist monastery, many other countries like Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, France, Germany and Burma etc have built their own temples and monasteries. Lumbini also has a museum and a research center for Buddhism. At present the Lumbini Development Trust is implementing a master plan to develop Lumbini according to Prof. K. Tange's design.

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Natural Sites

Chitwan National Park
Sagarmatha National Park

Refer to the following pages for natural sites:

National Parks of Nepal

Parks and Reserves

Nepal has nine National Parks, three Wildlife Reserves, three Conservation Areas and one Hunting Reserve. About 15,000 square kilometers amounting to almost 18 percent of the total area is protected. This is an amazing commitment to conservation.

Shey-Phoksundo National Park
Kanchenjunga Conservation Area
Sagarmatha National Park
Annapurna Conservation Area
Makalu Barun National Park
Shukla Phant Wildlife Reserve
Chitwan National Park
Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve
Langtang National Park
Koshi-Tappu Wildlife Reserve
Shivapuri National Park
Manaslu Conservation Area
Khaptad National Park
Parsa Wildlife Reserve
Rara National Park
Bardia National Park

Chitwan National Park

Asia's most well-preserved conservation area is the Chitwan National Park, where wildlife thrives and habitats remain intact. Only a half-hour flight away from Kathmandu, the park lies in the 'Tarai' region (plains) and is home to a range of wildlife including endangered species like the Greater One-horned rhinoceros and the elusive Royal Bengal tiger. Enlisted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the park has a particularly rich flora and fauna boasting more than 450 species of birds. Resorts within the park facilitate safaris on elephant back, boat ride or jeep drives.

Jaunty rides on elephant back, crossing rivers on dug-out canoes and catching unsuspecting wildlife in their natural habitat; these are thrills one is not likely to forget even years after the mystical holiday in Nepal. Chitwan owes its fame to Chitwan National Park, the most well-preserved conservation area in all of Asia. The park is home to a large variety of wildlife including the endangered Greater One-horned rhinoceros and the elusive Royal Bengal tiger. Chitwan, only a 30 minute flight away in southern Nepal, has a sub-tropical climate. Resorts both inside and outside the national park cater to the needs of tourists who come down for safari adventure in the jungles. Chitwan is easy to

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of the proposed changes on the system. The study is divided into two main parts: a theoretical analysis and an empirical study.

Theoretical Analysis

The theoretical analysis is divided into two main parts: a conceptual analysis and a mathematical analysis.

Conceptual Analysis

The conceptual analysis is divided into two main parts: a qualitative analysis and a quantitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis is divided into two main parts: a statistical analysis and a mathematical analysis.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis is divided into two main parts: a descriptive analysis and an inferential analysis.

Inferential Analysis

The inferential analysis is divided into two main parts: a hypothesis testing and a confidence interval estimation.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing is divided into two main parts: a parametric test and a non-parametric test.

Confidence Interval Estimation

The confidence interval estimation is divided into two main parts: a point estimate and a confidence interval.

Point Estimate

The point estimate is divided into two main parts: a sample mean and a sample proportion.

Sample Mean

The sample mean is divided into two main parts: a population mean and a sample mean.

Sample Proportion

The sample proportion is divided into two main parts: a population proportion and a sample proportion.

Population Proportion

The population proportion is divided into two main parts: a point estimate and a confidence interval.

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reach both by road and by air. The nearest airports are in Megghauli and Bharatpur and flights leave for these airports on a regular basis.

Chitwan National Park is the favorite destination of tourists looking for an enduring safari experience. Once this large tract of land was declared a national park, illegal settlements were halted and deforestation brought under control within its boundaries. At the same time poaching was controlled to some extent. The natural habitat of wildlife was preserved and they flourished. Major Projects were initiated to save the tiger and rhinoceros with the help of friendly nations and foreign institutions. As a result rhinos are quite commonly seen in Chitwan and occasionally the Bengal tiger can be spied well camouflaged among the tall grass. The Rapti River has been dammed to create a man-made lake called Lamital where waterfowl and many other exotic birds are found in abundance. Elephant grass that are five to six feet tall, provide excellent cover for animals.

Accommodation:

There are resorts and lodges of varying standards that cater to the needs of tourists both inside and outside the national park. Most include elephant safaris, jungle walks, canoeing and a variety of cultural activities in their programs. Reservations can be made at the Kathmandu offices of the various resorts and lodges. Accommodations range from the luxurious to some that offer simple food and shelter. The rich culture of the indigenous Tharu people of Chitwan can be observed first hand during village walks. Tharu cultural dance are performances to the delight of tourists who sometimes join in. There's never a dull moment in Chitwan with a choice of activities to fill your day, whether you stay two days or a week.

Wildlife and Breeding centers

Besides the rhinos and tigers there are sloth bears, wild boar, gaur (bison), 4 species of deer, 2 species of monkeys, 2 species of crocodiles, leopard, wild cats; a large variety of reptiles and over 500 species of birds. Apart from jungle safari, there are many places of interest within the park such as the Elephant Breeding Centre and Crocodile Farm where these animals have been successfully breeding in captivity.

Things to do

Jungle Safari: Jungle safari on elephant back is the highlight of a trip to Chitwan. The elephant takes visitors into the heart of the jungle clearing paths where there are none, wading through the river allowing an unmatched view of the jungle. It is a good photo opportunity as well with a view from the top. Jungle walks, jeep drives and canoe rides are the other means of seeking out the abundant bird-life and wide variety of flora and fauna in the Park. With a bit of luck, you may see the elusive Royal Bengal tiger too.

Birdwatching: The Chitwan National Park is made up of dry deciduous forest, tropical evergreen forest and riverine grasslands. The highest number of bird species (over 539) has been recorded here than in any other part of Nepal. The naturalist accompanying you will point out birds on trees that you would never have spotted on your own.

Getting there

By air: Daily flights from Kathmandu to Bharatpur airfield. Chitwan is also served by Megghauli airfield. The rest of the journey is by road.

A pleasant four- hour drive is a good means of seeing more of the country and reaching Chitwan at the end of the journey. The road goes over the Mahabharat Range (2,500 m) and follows the Trishuli River most of the way. An exciting means of reaching Chitwan is by rafting down the Trishuli.

Shey-Phoksundo National Park

Shey Phoksundo is Nepal's largest national park and covers 3,555 sq. km. Sitting astride the Dolpa and Mugu districts of western Nepal, the park was established to protect the trans-Himalayan ecosystem found only in few areas of the Kingdom. The unique park includes the Kanjiroba Himal, with many peaks of over 6,000 meters, as well as the famous Shey Monastery, the Phoksundo Lake and the Langu Gorge.

The flora of the area include pine, walnut, willow, oak, poplar and cypress in the lower southern parts. In the higher reaches, pine, spruce, juniper and birch pre-dominate. The alpine areas are vegetated by berberries, wild rose and caragana. The and trans-Himalayan mountains and grassy alpine meadows to the north are almost devoid of trees but have caragana and dwarf juniper.

The wildlife of Shey Phoksundo include a good popula-tion of blue sheep and ghoral, musk deer, leopard, wild dog, wolf, marmot, weasel, mouse hare, rhesus and langur monkeys. The higher reaches and the haunt of the elusive snow leopard. The adjoining Tibetan region is home to such rare animals as the great Tibetan sheep, Tibetan wild ass, Tibetan gazelle and antelope, and wild yak. Bird species of the park include the Impeyan and cheer Pheasant, chough, raven, Tibetan snow cock, Tibetan twit, brown dipper, Himalayan griffon and lammergeier. The park is inhabited by people of Tibetan descent who follow the pre-Buddist Bon religion and some of the main villages are Ringmo, Pugmo, Salclang, Kugun, and Tatgaun. On the august full moon all Dolpa villagers converge on the Shey (Crystal) Mountain in a festival to walk around the holy peak three times in as many days.

Entry Fee Per Person Per Entry:

For Nepalese Nationals, Free

For SAARC Nationals, Rs. 100/-

For Other Foreign Nationals, Rs. 1,000/-

Access:

The nearest airstrip is at Juphal, south of the park. Visitors can also fly to Jumla from where it is a 10 day hike to the Phoksundo and Shey areas. The best time to visit this park is from April to November.

Note:

Entrance fee not required for children under 10 years.

Park Entrance is regulated by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Phone: 4220850). Entrance fees for mountain National Parks can be paid at ACAP Counter (Phone: 4222406) at Sanchaykosh building in Thamel, Kathmandu, or at the Park gate. For other National Parks entrance fees are to be paid at the Park gate.

Sagarmatha National Park

Unique among natural heritage sites world-wide is the Sagarmatha National Park, which includes Mt. Everest (8,848 m) and other high peaks such as Lhotse Shar, Cho Oyu, Ama Dablam, Pumori, Kangtega, Gyachung Kang, Thamserku and Kwangde. Located North-east of Kathmandu, Sagarmatha National Park is 1,148 sq km. in area and consists of the upper catchment areas of the Dudh Koshi, Bhote Koshi and the Imja Khola rivers. Much of the park lies above 3,000m. Sagarmatha is rugged, with deep gorges, glaciers and unnegotiable ice and rock faces. Locally known as the 'Khumbu', it is the home of the famous Sherpa people. The Sherpas make a living by farming barley and potatoes and graze their yaks in high altitude pastures. Young Sherpas have also made their name in mountaineering and the trekking industry has of late become the community's economic mainstay. In 1979 the park was declared a World Heritage Site.

Trees such as rhododendron, birch, blue pine, juniper and silver fir are found up to an altitude of 4,000 meters above which they give way to scrub and alpine plants. In late spring and summer, the hillsides around the villages of Namche Bazaar, Khumjung, Thyangboche and Thame are a riot of colours with several species of rhododendron in bloom. Wildlife most likely to be seen in Sagarmatha are the Himalaya tahr, goral, musk deer, pikka (mouse hare) weasel and occasionally jackal. Other rarely seen animals are Himalayan black bear, wolf, lynx and snow leopard. Birds commonly seen are Impeyan pheasant, blood pheasant, snow cock, snow pigeon, red billed and yellow billed chough, Himalayan griffin vulture and lammergeier.

Entry Fee Per Person Per Entry:

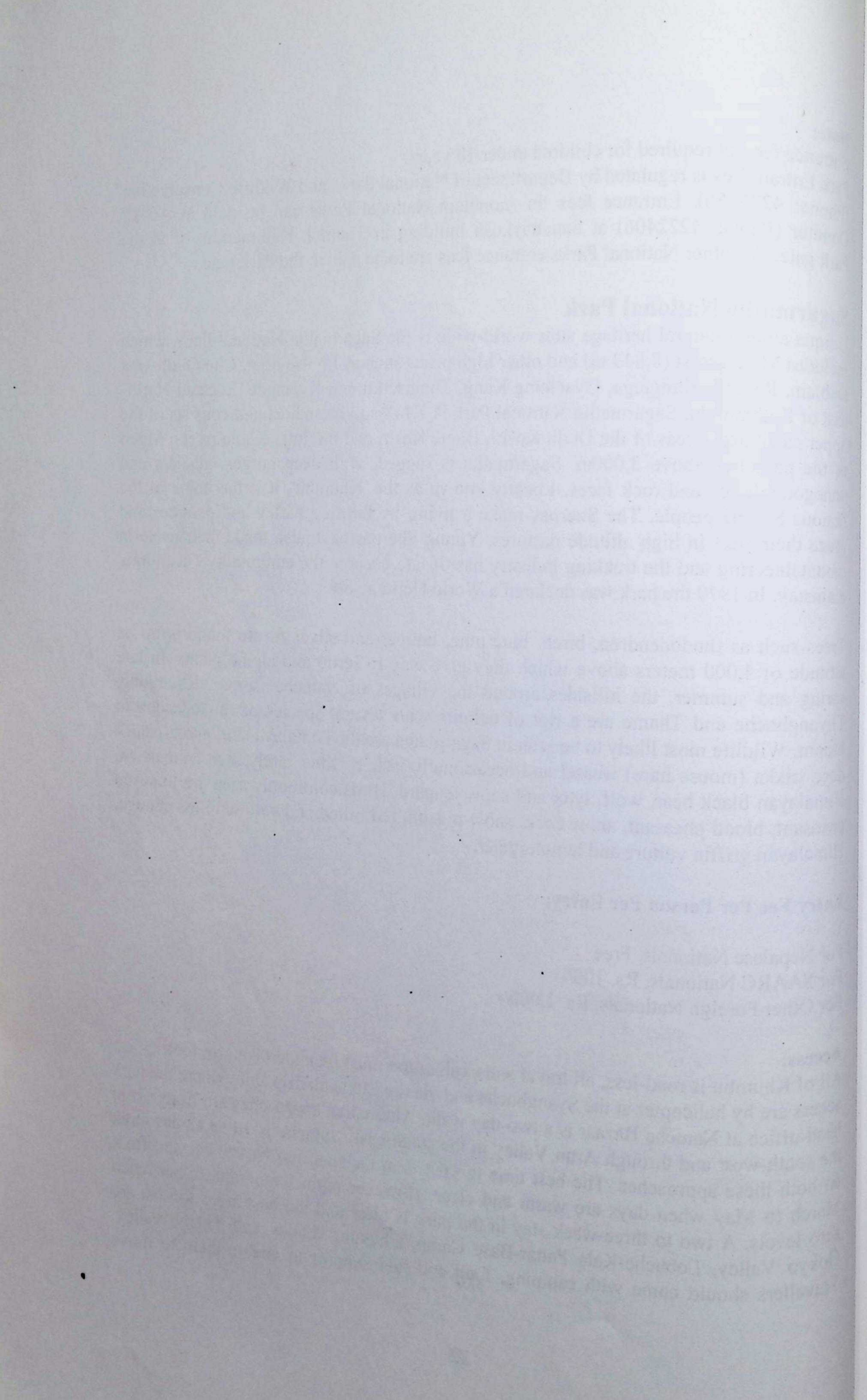
For Nepalese Nationals, Free

For SAARC Nationals, Rs. 100/-

For Other Foreign Nationals, Rs. 1,000/-

Access:

All of Khumbu is road-less, all travel and exploration must be undertaken on foot. Quick access are by helicopter at the Syangboche and via the Lukla airstrip from where the park head-office at Namche Bazaar is a two-day walk. Alternative approaches are from Jiri in the south-west and through Arun Valley in the south-east. Namche is 10 to 12 days trek on both these approaches. The best time to visit is in October and November and from March to May when days are warm and clear. However night temperatures can reach zero levels. A two to three-week stay in the park is ideal and the best areas to visit are Gokyo Valley, Lobuche-Kala Pattar-Base Camp, Chukung Valley and Thame valley. Travellers should come with camping, food and fuel support to enable them to move



freely although room and board are available in most villages. To enjoy the visit thoroughly it is best to arrange services of guides and porters with government registered outfitters in Kathmandu.

Note:

Entrance fee not required for children under 10 years.

Entrance fees is regulated by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Phone: 4220850). Entrance fees for mountain National Parks can be paid at ACAP counter (Phone: 4222406) at Sanchaykosh building in Thamel, Kathmandu, or at the Park gate. For other National Parks entrance fees are to be paid at the Park gate

Makalu Barun National Park

The park and conservation area is situated in the Sankhuwasabha and Solukhumbu districts, bordered by the Arun River on the east, Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) National Park on the west, the Nepal-Tibet border on the north and Saune Danda (ridge) to the south. The Park covers 2,330 sq. kms.

This is the only protected area in Nepal with designation of a Strict Nature Reserve. It has some of the richest and most unique pockets of plants and animals in Nepal, elsewhere lost to spreading human habitation. Stepping up the slopes are a series of vegetation zones starting with tropical sal forest below 1,000 m. elevation: subtropical schima-castanopsis forest at 1,000-2000 m. fir, birch, rhododendron forests in the sub-alpine(3,000-4,000 m); and herbs, grasses and rhododendron/juniper shrubs in the alpine pas trues (4,000-5,000 m). There are 47 varieties of orchids, 67 species of bamboos, 15 oaks including Arkhoulo, 86 species of fodder trees and 48 species of primrose. Over 400 species of birds have been sighted in the Makalu-Barun area, including two species never before seen in Nepal the spotted wrenbabbler and the olive ground warbler. Wildlife includes the endangered red panda, musk deer, Himalayan black bear, clouded leopard and possibly snow leopard, in addition to more substantial populations of ghoral, thar, wild boar, barking deer, Himalayan marmot and weasel, common langur monkey and the serow. The Arun river system contains 84 varieties of fish.

Entry Fee Per Person Per Entry:

For Nepalese Nationals, Free

For SAARC Nationals, Rs. 100/-

For Other Foreign Nationals, Rs. 1,000/-

Access:

To reach Makalu-Barun National Park & Conservation Area, take the daily flight from Kathmandu to Lukla, Phaplu, Lamidanda, Bhojpur and Tumlingtar. Visitors choice to fly any one air link airports then trek.

Note:

Entrance fee not required for children under 10 yearsPark

Entrance fees is regulated by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Phone: 4220850). Entrance fees for mountain National Parks can be paid at ACAP counter (Phone: 4222406) at Sanchaykosh building in Thamel, Kathmandu, or at the Park gate. For other National Parks entrance fees are to be paid at the Park gate

Langtang National Park

Langtang is one of the most unspoiled national parks of Nepal. Situated North of Kathmandu, it is the most easily accessible highland sanctuary from the capital. Langtang covers 1,710 sq. km. forming the upper catchment areas of two of Nepal's largest river systems - the Trishuli and Koshi. There is great latitudinal variation, starting at 1,500 m. and ascending to the top of Mt. Langtang Lirung at 7,234 m. As a result the park has immense ecological diversity. Some of the most attractive areas of the park include the Langtang Valley, the holy lakes at Gosainkunda, and the forested hillsides above the village of Helambu.

The deep gorges of Bhote Koshi and Langtang Khola are thickly forested with rhododendron, oak, maple and alder. The stretch of forest around Ghoda Tabela in the lower Langtang Valley and below Gosainkunda is inhabited by the red panda, a rare and threatened symbol of a healthy Himalayan ecosystem. Other animals, common to these forests are wild boar, Himalayan black bear, ghoral, grey langur monkey and leopard. The rare Himalayan hony guide has been sighted here and the park is also the home for Impeyan, Tragopan and kalij pheasants among others. Larch, a rare deciduous conifer, is also found in the forest of lower Langtang Valley. Further up, Himalayan tahr, musk deer and snow leopard can be found. The upper Langtang Valley is one of the few known breeding grounds of the ibis besides the Tibetan snow cock and snow partridge.

Like other Himalayan nature parks, Langtang has to be explored on foot. There are several possible trails to choose from depending on preference and time available. The Langtang Valley is easily approached from Dhunche town and park office, which is a day's drive from Kathmandu. The upper reaches of Langtang can be reached in four days of easy walking, however, it is advisable to spend a few days around the forest at Ghoda Tabela to watch for the red panda. Once above Langtang village and the monastery at Kyangin, visitors can explore the high valley of Langshisa Yala peak and Tsero, Ri. These and other villages of upper Langtang are inhabited by people of Tibetan descent whereas the villagers of Dhunche, Bharkhu and Syabru further down are home to the Tamangs of Nepal's middle hills.

Entry Fee Per Person Per Entry:

For Nepalese Nationals, Free

For SAARC Nationals, Rs. 100/-

For Other Foreign Nationals, Rs. 1,000/-

(Note: Entrance fee not required for children under 10 years).

Access:

The high pass out of Langtang, Gang la (5,132 m), can be negotiated only by well prepared hikers with guides, food and camping equipment. The Gosainkunda can also be

reached in a few days from Dhunche, making it possible to visit both areas in the same outing.

Alternatively, trekkers can hike to Gosainkunda from Sundarjal in the Kathmandu Valley via the picturesque villages of Helambu. The richly forested route that climbs steeply from here to Thare Pati and Gopte Cave is alive with birds and flowering rhododendron and orchids in the spring. Tourists can visit the Langtang National Park anytime from March to November but it is best to avoid the monsoon season because of rains and overflowing rivers. The nature enthusiast on the other hand might find the rainy season ideal because of the profusion of plant life.

Note:

Entrance fee not required for children under 10 yearsPark.

Entrance fees is regulated by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Phone: 4220850). Entrance fees for mountain National Parks can be paid at ACAP counter (Phone: 4222406) at Sanchaykosh building in Thamel, Kathmandu, or at the Park gate. For other National Parks entrance fees are to be paid at the Park gate.

Kanchenjunga Conservation Area

Kanchanjunga Conservation Area belt lies below Mt. Kanchanjunga. The region with its alpine grasslands, rocky outcrops, low river valleys, temperate and sub-tropical forests is situated in Taplejung district that borders with the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China. The Kanchanjunga Conservation Area has been selected as one of the 200 Global eco regions recognized by World Wildlife Fund. Ten species among Nepal 20 indigenous gymnosperms and 15 among Nepal 28 endemic flowering plants are found in this region. In addition, almost 30 varieties of rhododendron species and 69 varieties of orchids are found here. The area is splashed with colours every spring with wild displays of rhododendrons, orchids, lilies, primula and other flowers. Wildlife includes endangered snow leopard, Himalayan black bear, musk deer, red panda, blue sheep and rhesus macaw. About 202 species of different birds including Impheyan pheasant, red-billed blue magpie, shy drongo are found in the area. The region can be reached via Basantapu in Dhankuta district or Birtamod in Jhapa district. The area can also be reached through Dharan, which is 40 kilometres north from Biratnagar. Yet another option is to fly to Biratnagar and then to Sukhetar in Taplejung district from where the region can be trekked. Tourist facilities are available in Dharan, Dhankuta and Biratnagar.

Entry Fee Per Person Per Entry:

For Nepalese Nationals, Free
For SAARC Nationals, Rs. 100/-
For Other Foreign Nationals, Rs. 1000/-

Access:

Fly to Sukhetar from Biratnagar and trek from there onward.

Note:

Entrance fee not required for children under 10 years.

Entrance fees is regulated by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Phone: 4220850). Entrance fees for mountain National Parks can be paid at ACAP counter (Phone: 4222406) at Sanchaykosh building in Thamel, Kathmandu, or at the Park gate. For other National Parks entrance fees are to be paid at the Park gate.

Shivapuri National Park

Popular as trekking, hiking and recreation area, the Shivapuri National Park offers the nearest retreat away from the hubbub of city life. The park was established as a Watershed and Wildlife Reserve in 1976. the park was declared as national ark in 2003 for the protection of its unique natural adornments. Vegetation varieties in the park include its 129 species of mushrooms while animals include 19 species of mammals include bear, leopard, deer, wild boar, wildcat and langur monkey. The park also boasts of 177 species of birds and 102 species of butterflies.

Entry Fee Per Person Per Entry:

For Nepalese Nationals, Rs.10/-

For SAARC Nationals, Rs. 100/-

For Other Foreign Nationals, Rs. 1,000/-

(Note: Entrance fee not required for children under 10 years).

Access:

Only 12 kilometers away from Kathmandu, the gateway to Shivapuri National Park is Budhaikanta which is 15 to 20 minutes drive away from the city. Another option is via Sundarjal which is about 30 to 45 minutes drive from Kathmandu. From both Budhanilkantha and Sundarjal, the park requires trekking uphill. Yet another way to reach Shivapuri is by driving till Kakani from where the park is an hour's trek away.

Khaptad National Park

Khaptad, Nepal's newest park area, is in the middle hills of the Far-West of the country. The 225 sq kms. area of the park is situated where the districts of Bajhang, Bajura, Doti and Achham meet. Khaptad is plateau of grassland and forest cover at an elevation of about 3,000 meters. The mixed conifer and broad-leaf forests are an excellent example of the vegetation that once covered much of west Nepal's middle hills. The forest consists of a mixture of tall fir, yew, rhododendron, oak, dense strands of bamboo and smaller shrubs. This habitat provides good cover for bear, leopard, barking and musk deer, as well as birds like the Impeyan, koklas and kalij pheasants. This park is special because it represents one of the few remaining mid-mountain ecosystems in Nepal Himalaya. At the north-eastern corner of the park, a small serene lake and swampy area called Khaptad Daha is religious site where Hindu pilgrims come to worship Shiva on the full moon of July-August each year. Here lived the ascetic, the Khaptad Baba, who was known and revered throughout Nepal. Khaptad National Park & Saipal Himal

Entry Fee Per Person Per Entry:

For Nepalese Nationals, Free

For SAARC Nationals, Rs. 100/-

For Other Foreign Nationals, Rs. 1,000/-

Access:

The easiest access is to fly to Dipayal or Chainpur or Sanfebagar or Kolti from where it is a few days hike to the national park. It is also possible to drive to Silgadi from Dhangadi. The best time to visit Khaptad is in March and April and in October and November. Travellers should hike with camping equipment, food and guides, arranged through trekking agents in Kathmandu.

Note:

Entrance fee not required for children under 10 years.

Entrance fees is regulated by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Phone: 4220850). Entrance fees for mountain National Parks can be paid at ACAP counter (Phone: 4222406) at Sanchaykosh building in Thamel, Kathmandu, or at the Park gate. For other National Parks entrance fees are to be paid at the Park gate.

Rara National Park

Situated about 370 km. north-west of Kathmandu, Rara is Nepal's smallest and most scenic national park covers 106 square km. Much of the park is at an altitude of about 3,000 meters forested by conifers. The park was established in 1976 and protects some of the most beautiful alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems of the Himalaya. The centrepiece is the pristine Lake Rara, also Known as Mahendra Tal, the biggest lake in Nepal. The lake is surrounded by richly forested hills, Chuchemara Danda at 4,087 meters is the best vantagepoint to get stunning views of the lake and the thickly forested hillsides and the snow-capped peaks around it. Other summits in the park area are Ruma kand (3,731 m.) and Malika Kand (3,444 m.), situated to the north of the lake.

Rara comes within the catchment area of the Karnali River, one of the three main river systems of Nepal. The habitat supports animals like the red panda, black bear, yellow-throated martin, ghoral, serow and musk deer. There have also been reported sightings of leopard and wolf. The lake attracts migrant wildfowl like teals, pochards and mallards. Resident birds include the Impeyan, kalij and blood pheasant as well as others like the chukkor partridge.

Entry Fee Per Person Per Entry:

For Nepalese Nationals, Free

For SAARC Nationals, Rs. 100/-

For Other Foreign Nationals, Rs. 1,000/-

Access:

The easiest way to get to Rara is by flying to Jumla or Kolti from Kathmandu via Nepalgunj, followed by a three-day hike to the park office at Hutu. The alternative route is to take a bus from Nepalgunj to Surkhet, from where it is a weeks' hike to the park. Visitors should travel with camping gear and guides which will offer them the flexibility to explore Rara where basic accommodation is available only at the park office. The best time to visit the region is from February to April and in October and November.

Note:

Entrance fee not required for children under 10 years.

Entrance fees is regulated by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (Phone: 4220850). Entrance fees for mountain National Parks can be paid at ACAP counter (Phone: 4222406) at Sanchaykosh building in Thamel, Kathmandu, or at the Park gate. For other National Parks entrance fees are to be paid at the Park gate

Hill Stations of Nepal

Nepal is basically known for its altitudinal variations, ranging between 100 m above the sea level to pinnacle of the Earth, the Mt. Everest. This fact describes Nepal as the mountainous country encompassing many sky-penetrating mountains with lush green meadows, serene hills and deepest gorge. Notable among hill stations include: Bandipur, Nagarkot, Dhulikhel, Tansen, Gorkha amongst others.

Bandipur is an ancient trading town of quaint streets and charming atmosphere, which lies 135 km out on the Kathmandu -Pokhara highway. Bandipur retains its age-old cultural attributes. Nagarkot, located 32 kilometers east of Kathmandu, is one of the most scenic spots in Bhaktapur district and is renowned for its spectacular sunrise view of the Himalaya when the weather is clear. Nagarkot has become famous as one of the best spots to view Mount Everest as well as other snow-topped peaks of the Himalayan range of eastern Nepal. Dhulikhel is a scenic and ancient town situated 30 kilometers east of Kathmandu on the Arniko Rajmarg (Kathmandu Kodari Highway). From here one has a panoramic view of the Himalayan range. Tansen is on the way from Pokhara to Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, and it is not too far from the Chitwan National Park and located around 1,300 meters above sea level, on the south flank of Srinagar Hill. Gorkha is a scenic hill- town with great historical significance. King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who unified the Nepal during eighteenth century, was born in the township of Gorkha. It offers panoramic view of snow-fed mountains.

Nagarkot

Nagarkot, located 32 kilometers east of Kathmandu, is one of the most scenic spots in Bhaktapur district and is renowned for its spectacular sunrise view of the Himalaya when the weather is clear. Visitors often travel to Nagarkot from Kathmandu to spend the night so that they can be there for the breathtaking sunrise. Nagarkot has become famous as one of the best spots to view Mount Everest as well as other snow-topped peaks of the Himalayan range of eastern Nepal. It also offers an excellent view of the Indrawati river valley to the east. With an elevation of 2,195 meters, Nagarkot also offers a panoramic view of the Valley and is described by visitors as a place whose beauty endures year round.

Many visitors prefer to visit Nagarkot in the spring when surrounding valleys break out in a rich kaleidoscope of different coloured flowers. The flowers are beautiful against the serene backdrop of the snow-covered mountains. Ever popular among the tourists are the short treks and picnics which Nagarkot offers. Treks from Nagarkot are unique and delightful. For anyone who wants to have an adventure without exerting much efforts, a hike to Nagarkot's surrounding areas would be a good option. One can traverse short distances on trekking trails and come close to nature's wonders such as the outer of verdant forests, flower-covered meadows and unusual rock formations.

Dhulikhel

Dhulikhel is a scenic and ancient town situated 30 kilometers east of Kathmandu on the Arniko Rajmarg (Kathmandu Kodari Highway). From here one has a panoramic view of the Himalayan range. From the main town, a short visit to Namobuddha, with the stupa and Buddhist Monastery, is highly recommended. Panauti, a village noted for its numerous temples with magnificent woodcarvings, is a short distance from Dhulikhel.

Daman

For a view of the breathtaking grandeur of the world's highest peaks from the far west of Dhaulagiri to the east of Mt. Everest, there is no better place than Daman. It lies eighty kilometers south-west of Kathmandu on the mountain highway known as Tribhuvan Rajpath and has a view tower fitted with a long range telescope.

Kakani is another good location for viewing the mountain scenery. Only two hours north-west of Kathmandu, one can see the mountain landscape of central Nepal, a vast collection of majestic peaks stretching from Ganesh Himal to the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri ranges. There is an unusually perfect blending of the imposing mountain scenery with the more sylvan environment of the lower valleys. Rhododendrons growing wild on the mountain slopes begin to bloom in late winter and stay in bloom for several months, giving the village even more charm.

Ilam

Ilam is the far eastern district of the country, inhabited by people of different colors living in peace and harmony. Neighboring the famous Indian hill town of Darjeeling, it is situated on the foothills of Mount Kanchanjunga, The third highest peak in the world. Ilam is adorned with an almost limitless range of lush-green tea gardens. The rolling hills covered with tea leaves are simply majestic. The thick white fogs alternatively descend to veil the gardens and then suddenly vanish. Greenery prevails all over the hills of Ilam all around the year.

Ilam Tea Garden located near Ilam Bazaar and Kanyam Tea Garden located halfway between Terai plain and Ilam Bazaar are the major gardens of Nepal.

Principal Sights:

Antu Danda: Antu Danda, situated at an altitude of 1677m in Ilam District, is famous for its unique views of Everest and Kanchanjunga. It is the best vantage point for viewing sunrise and sunset. There is a motorable road from Ilam to Chhipitar from where one can read Antu Danda on foot. This exhilarating trekking along the lush green hills takes about 3 hours.

Mai Pokhari: Situated at an altitude of 2438 meters, Mai Pokhari is a famous place of pilgrimage in Ilam district. Lying at about thirteen kilometers north of Ilam Bazaar, this beautiful place consists of the pond whose circumference is more than one kilometer. Altogether there are nine ponds in the area some of which are large enough for boats. This place becomes alive every year during 'Harisayam Ekadashi' when a one-night fair is held. This place is a famous picnic spot for nearby people. Mai Pokhari can be reached in four hours from Ilam Bazaar in jeep. On the way are the villages of Chureghanti,

Bakhaute, Dharapani and Hasbire Bhanjyang, which offer commanding views of the snowy peaks towards north.

Getting There: Ilam is linked by a fine metalled road with the East-West Highway of Nepal. Pashupatinagar, situated at northern boarder of Ilam, is an important entry point for travelers from Sikkim, Darjeeling and Mirik. Darjeeling, a famous hill station of India, is just two hours drive from Pashupatinagar. There are regular bus services to Pashupatinagar and Ilam from Kathmandu and Biratnagar.

Accommodation: There are a number of hotels and lodges in Ilam.

Hile

Hile is situated about 13 km north of Dhankuta Bazaar. The panorama of the major peaks of eastern Himalaya including Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest), Makalu, Lhotse and Kumbhakarna can be enjoyed from Hile.

Getting There: There are plenty of bus services operating between Dhankuta and Hile. In fact most buses to Dhankuta continue as far as Hile.

Accommodation: Hile is facilitated with a number of hotels and lodges for average to luxurious accommodations.

Dharan

Dharan lies right at the foot of hills, but the transformation when coming from Terai is dramatic. It is a hill town with hill people. Dharan is also the gateway to such towns in eastern hills as Dhankuta which are being developed as regional center for the whole area. Until 1989 there used to be a British Gurkha Camp in Dharan which was used to recruit Gurkha soldiers from the eastern hills. Rais and Limbus from eastern Nepal used to constitute the major portion of Gurkha soldiers. Dharan is now a bustling bazaar town that has grown rapidly. Temples of Dhantakali, Buda Subba and Singha Bahini in Dharan are unique and famous,

Getting There: This hill town is linked by a metalled road with the East-West Highway of Nepal. It takes two hours in bus to reach to Dharan from Biratnagar.

Accommodation: There are a number of standard hotels and lodges in Dharan.

Some Famous Cities of Nepal

Kathmandu

Asan: Once the center of old Kathmandu, Asan has six roads radiating in all directions. The three storied pagoda style Annapurna temple plays a pivotal role in most festivals held here and is dedicated to the Goddess of Grains. The other temple of importance is the two storied shrine dedicated to Lord Ganesh. Asan is still an important shopping center and one of the busiest markets places with shops selling anything from imported spices to kitchenware, fresh vegetables, Chinese goods, hardware and clothes.

Thamel: As the tourist district of Kathmandu, Thamel bustles with activity late into the night. It is a mere 10-minute's walk from the center of Kathmandu, yet completely different from the rest of the city. Thamel caters entirely to tourists with its scores of hotels, rows of restaurants and bars, book shops, inviting souvenir shops, cyber cafes and travel agencies. All that a tourist needs can be found here, even friends and traveling companions.

Dharahara: The soaring landmark of Kathmandu, the Dharahara tower is 50.5 m high and was built by the then Prime Minister Bhimsen Thapa in 1832. Once closed to the public, it was recently opened and anyone can go up after paying the entrance fee. The 360 deg. astounding view of the Kathmandu Valley is well worth the long climb up the spiraling staircase.

Balaju Gardens: 5 km north-west of Kathmandu is the Balaju Gardens, a quiet park ideal for relaxation. The park has a line of twenty-two stone water spouts built in the 18th Century, each of which has an ornately carved crocodile head. During an annual festival, people come here to bathe. The garden has a swimming pool open to the public and the ponds beside the flower gardens are teeming with fishes. A replica of the stone image of Budanilkantha was built here specifically for the royal family as they were barred from visiting the real one.

Garden of Dreams: In close proximity with Thamel, the Garden of Dreams is part of the Kaiser Mahal, a palace built in 1895 by the then Prime Minister Bir SJB Rana. It was later inherited by his son Chandra SJB Rana who went on to create the landscaped garden. He eventually presented the remarkable garden to his son Kaiser SJB Rana as a wedding gift. A learned man with great aesthetic sense, Kaiser Shumsher turned the garden into a work of art. It included a fabulous lawn, wooded area where birds roosted, flower gardens and a pond for ducks. Within the Garden wall, Kaiser Shumsher created an exquisite ensemble of pavilions, fountains, decorative garden furniture, and added European features such as verandas, pergolas, balustrades, urns, and birdhouses. He erected six impressive freestanding pavilions, each dedicated to one of the six seasons of

Nepal namely- Basanta (spring), Grishma (summer), Barkha (monsoon), Sharad (early autumn), Hemanta (late autumn) and Shishir (winter). However, after the death of Kaiser Shumsher in 1965, his family bequeathed some portion of the Kaiser Mahal including his garden and Kaiser Library to the government. After years of neglect the garden was in ruins. However, recently it was renovated and restored to its former glory. Today it is open to the public with a restaurant and bar to raise money for its upkeep.

Budhanilkantha: The largest of Vishnu's stone statues, Budanikantha also known as 'the Reclining Vishnu' is located 8 km north of Kathmandu. Known as Budhanilkantha, the large impressive statue of lord Vishnu reclines on a bed of snakes known as 'Nags'. Located in the center of a small pond, this 5th Century shrine attracts Hindu pilgrims and large crowds gather during the festivals of Haribodhini Ekadasi and Kartik Poornima.

Things to do around Kathmandu

Explore Kathmandu: The three cities of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur are of historical importance and retain monuments of immense artistic and cultural value. There are temples everywhere you turn and dedicated to a host of gods and goddesses. The major tourist spots are the World Heritage Sites of Pashupatinath, Swoyambhunath, Bouddhanath, Changu Narayan and the three Durbar Squares of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur.

Nepalese Art and Craft: Handicrafts are one of Nepal's major exports chiefly metal craft and wood carvings. The Newar community is blessed with the ancient traditions of carving on stone, woods and metals, handed down from generation to generation. Some of the finest of Nepalese art and craft come in the form of wood carvings, metal statues, jewelry, the famous Gorkha knife-- the Khukuri, pottery, handmade rice paper, thang and pauvas, woolen carpets and garments.

Visit Hanuman Dhoka Palace: Worth a visit are the three museums housed in the sprawling historical Hanuman Dhoka Palace in central Kathmandu: Tribhuvan, Mahendra, and Birendra Museums, dedicated to the Shah rulers, they showcase the lifestyles of three generations of Shah Kings in the form of their offices, gym, hunting room, the clothes they wore and their hobbies. Also on display are a collection of artifacts dating back to their time on the throne. One of the highlights of visiting the old palace is the nine storied Basantapur section of the durbar with its exquisitely carved giant windows that lean out of the building.

National Museum: Located in Chauni, near Swoyambhu, the building that houses the National Museum was once the residence of Nepal's most famous Prime Minister, Bhimsen Thapa of Dharahara fame. The museum has a fine collection of ancient Nepalese religious art, amazing weapons and costumes worn in battle in ancient times, a sword gifted by Napoleon III; of particular interest are the Tibetan leather cannon and locally built machine gun. The coin section has a fascinating collection of antique while

the Buddhist section preserves thangkas from the 18th and 19th centuries and pieces of old ruins found during excavations.

Casinos:

For a small town, Kathmandu has an unbelievable seven casinos with one more in the offing, all providing non-stop action of fun and games. Besides gaming, there is regular entertainment in the form of concerts and dance performances. Visit Casino Royale (Durbar Marg), Casino Nepal (Tahachal), Casino Anna (Durbar Marg), Casino Tara (Bouddha), Casino Rad (Lazimpat) or Casino Everest (New Baneshwor) Casino Shangri-la (Lazimpat). Roulette, Black Jack, Flush, Pontoon, Caribbean Stud are some of the games available.

Shop for souvenirs: Thamel is ideal for souvenir shopping as almost everything a tourist looks for can be found here. Nepali handicrafts, garments, painstakingly made thangkas, and endless varieties of gems and jewelry, religious artifacts, singing bowls, stone carvings, wood carvings, metal craft, Tibetan curios, coins, carpets, etc can all be purchased in Thamel.

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Shop for Thangkas & Pauvas: Thangkas are Tibetan Buddhist scroll paintings although most are made by trained Nepali artists while pauvas are Nepali religious scroll paintings. These paintings are painstakingly made according to instructions that were laid down in the early days of scroll painting. The paintings have deep spiritual meaning and significance many of which have the Buddha as the main subject. Some thangkas are used for meditation purposes while others are used for prayer. Thangkas are painted on canvas and are either hung up or kept rolled up while not in use. A superbly made thangka can fetch thousands of dollars. Visit Thamel, Bouddha, Patan and Bhaktapur to shop for unique pieces of thangkas and pauvas.

Taste Dal Bhat and Tarkari and Chutney: the Nepali Food: Every hotel, big or small, can offer you Dal Bhat Tarkari and Chutney, a typical Nepali meal.

Getting there

Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) links the city to the outside world with direct international flights arriving from Doha, Dubai, Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Osaka, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Karachi, Islamabad, Abu Dabi, Bahrain, Dhaka and other destinations. Domestic flights also take off from TIA including the popular mountain flights.

For the adventurous with time on their hands, the overland route is an exciting option. The highways link Kathmandu to popular destinations like Pokhara, Chitwan and

Lumbini besides the bordering cities leading out to India like Birjung, Bhairawa, Kakarvitta, Nepalgunj and Mahendranagar and China via Kodari.

Patan (Lalitpur)

Patan also known as 'Lalitpur' literally, *the City of Artisans*, lies 5km southeast of Kathmandu, and is home to the valley's finest craftsmen who preserve ancient techniques such as repoussé and the lost wax process, still producing exquisite pieces of sculpture. The city retains much of the old charm with its narrow streets, brick houses and the multitude of well-preserved Hindu temples and Buddhist monasteries (Vihars). The predominant sound in Patan is not motor vehicles but the tinkering of craftsmen bent over the statuettes they are shaping. As in Kathmandu, Hinduism and Buddhism have co-existed here for ages, influencing each other and the religious harmony is exemplary.

Around Patan

Hiranya Varna Mahabihar: Dating back to the 12th Century A.D. the three storied golden pagoda of Lokeshwar in Patan was built by King Bhaskar Varma. Located in the courtyard of Kwabahal, this temple is in a class of its own. On the upper floor is a golden image of Lord Buddha and a large prayer wheel on a pedestal. Intricate decorative patterns on its outer walls add charm to the mellow richness of the shrine.

Kumbheshwar: The temple of Kumbheswar is the only five storied pagoda in Patan and is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is believed that a natural spring within the courtyard of this temple has its source in the very popular glacial lake of Gosainkunda. Built by King Jayasthiti Malla, the golden finial was added later in 1422 A.D. During his time the pond was cleaned and various images of Narayan, Ganesh, Sitala, Basuki, Gauri, Kirtimukh and Agamadevata were added around the pond and in the courtyard. A large gathering of devotees arrive here for ritual bathing on the day of Janai Poornima each year.

Jagat Narayan: The Jagat Narayan temple on the banks of the Bagmati River at Sankhamul is a tall shikhara-style temple consecrated to Lord Vishnu. Built of red bricks, the temple has many fine images. An attractive metal statue of Garuda mounted on a stone monolith is accompanied by several images of Ganesh and Hanuman.

Mahaboudha: The famous temple of Mahabouddha in Patan is unique for its thousand little images of Buddha in terracotta. This artistically built shikhara-style temple is a fine specimen and owes its existence to a priest named Abhaya Raj. Every brick on the surface of this shrine bears a small image of the Buddha. After it was completely destroyed during the great earthquake of 1933, a new one was built replicating the original to the exact specifications. Mahaboudha is one of the major attractions of Patan.

Ashoka Stupas: Although there is little evidence that the Emperor Ashoka ever visited Kathmandu valley, there are four stupas supposedly built by him in 250 AD. Marking the four corners of Patan, three of these stupas are merely mounds of earth with prayer

wheels around them while the fourth near Shankamul is a beautiful concrete stupa. At the time they were built, Buddhism flourished in the Kathmandu Valley.

Machhendranath Temple: The temple of Red Machchhendranath, the God of Rain is of great importance in Patan. The temple lies in the middle of a wide, spacious quadrangle just at the outer rim of the market place. A clay image of Red Machchhendranath or Avalokiteshwar is kept here for six months each year, after which it is placed on a chariot and taken round the city of Patan in a boisterous colorful procession as part of a festival that begins in April-May and lasts for several months.

The Tibetan Refugee Camp: A large number of Tibetans fled their homeland in Tibet and settled in Nepal during the early 1960s. To shelter these homeless people the government of Nepal set up the Tibetan Refugee Camp on the outskirts of Patan. The Tibetans brought their carpet weaving skills to Nepal and soon a carpet industry was thriving in the valley. The camp has become a tourist attraction with its souvenir shops that sell carpets and handicrafts such as prayer wheels made of wood, ivory, silver or bronze along with an assortment of belt buckles, wooden bowls and jewelry. A stupa and a number of shrines have also been built within the camp.

Pokhara

Pokhara valley, the 'Jewel of the mid-west' is a favorite of tourists from around the globe. With the magnificent Annapurna range of mountains as a backdrop and the serenity of the three lakes of Phewa, Rupa and Begnas, Pokhara is the ultimate destination for relaxation. Yet the valley has grown in recent years as the destination for adventures sports such as paragliding and ultra-light flights. With boating, bird watching, trekking and mountain biking as the other attractions, Pokhara has it all.

Pokhara sits high on the list of 'must visit' places in Nepal. Tourists on extended holidays in Nepal make multiple visits to this famous valley of the three lakes. The tourist district of Pokhara better known as 'Lakeside Pokhara' is quite distinctly separate from Pokhara city. Lakeside sprawls beside Phewa Lake and is reminiscent of Thamel except for the ample space and miniscule traffic which makes Pokhara so much more enjoyable and relaxed than its counterpart in Kathmandu. The enchanting Pokhara valley with the dominating presence of Mt. Machhapuchhare (Fishtail Mountain) in the background is the gateway to the Annapurna region where many a trekker finds his Shangri-la. Pokhara is also ideally placed for adventure sports such as: rafting, paragliding and ultra-light flights. The relaxed atmosphere on the shores of Phewa Lake gives a trekker a much needed respite from days of hiking up and down the hills and mountains on one of the popular Annapurna treks. The crowded bars and restaurants are the places to seek companionship, where tall stories and real life experiences are shared with perfect strangers. The friendly Nepalese make a tourist feel at home to the point where many stay on for extended periods and come each year to seek those friends he's made and find peace of mind.

Pokhara's bewitching beauty has been the subject of many travel writers. Its pristine air,

the spectacular backdrop of the snowy peaks, the serene lakes and the surrounding greenery make it 'the jewel in the Himalaya', a place of remarkable natural beauty. Mt. Machhapuchhare (6,977 m) has a mesmerizing effect on any nature lover and the Phewa Lake creates an ambience of peace that is magical. Warmer than Kathmandu because of its lower altitude, Pokhara is pleasant in the winter and has a rich flora and fauna making it ideal for bird watching.

Pokhara once lay on the important trade route between India and Tibet. To this day, mule trains arrive and set up camp on the outskirts of the town, bringing goods from remote regions of the Himalaya including Mustang. The people of this region are predominantly Magars and Gurungs, hardworking farmers who are known for their valor and have earned world-wide fame as fierce Gurkha warrior soldiers. The other well-known ethnic group found here are the Thakalis. Known for their entrepreneurship, they run many tea houses along the trek routes in the Annapurna region.

Places to see

Mountain Views

Pokhara is blessed with stunning panoramic views of the Annapurna range which forms its backdrop. Although not the highest in the range, Machhapuchhare dominates because of its proximity to the valley and can be seen from anywhere in Pokhara. Stretching from east to west, the Annapurna massif includes Annapurna I to IV and Annapurna South. Further away are seen the giants, Dhaulagiri (8,167m) and Manaslu (8,163m).

Phewa Lake

Pokhara owes its popularity to enchanting Phewa Lake and along its eastern shore has grown the Lakeside town where tourists gather. It is the largest and most beautiful of the three lakes attracting a large number of visitors who enjoy boating on its placid waters. Boat can be hired and many visit the island temple that lies out in the middle of the lake. The other past time is sailing. Lakeside or Baidam, is a thriving resort town of hotels, restaurants, bars and souvenir shops that allows travelers to relax and yet have all they need.

Barahi Temple (Show in Map)

Located in the middle of Phewa Lake, the Barahi temple is the most important monument in Pokhara. The two storied pagoda is dedicated to the boar manifestation of Ajima who represents the female force Shakti. Sacrifices take place here and the largest crowds of devotees are seen on Saturdays, the official holiday in Nepal.

Seti Gandaki (Show in Map)

An amazing aspect of Pokhara is the vanishing river. A natural wonder, the Seti Gandaki goes underground, vanishing from sight in many places along its route through the city. At various points the river is barely two meters wide where its depth reaches an astonishing 20 meters! A good spot for watching the river below is Mahendra Pul, a small bridge near the old Mission Hospital. Here the river can be seen in all its ferocity gushing down the deep gorge that it has carved over millennia.

David's Fall

Locally known as the Patale Chhango (Nether Fall), David's Fall (known variously as Devin's and Devi's Fall) is a charming little waterfall located about 2 km south-west of the Pokhara airport on the Siddhartha Highway. Many years ago a trekker named David or Devin is said to have been washed away by the river Pardi Khola and disappeared in an underground passage beneath the fall.

Mahendra Cave

A major attraction of Pokhara is the Mahendra Gupha, a limestone cave reached after a two-hour walk north of Pokhara. Known as the 'House of Bats' owing to a number of bats living within its walls, the cave is an interesting labyrinth of stalactites and stalagmites. Visitors will be well-advised to bring their own torches to closely inspect the formations. There is another deep cave called Bat's Cave known as the 'House of Bats' owing to a number of bats living within its walls.

World Peace Pagoda

World Peace Pagoda can be seen on the top of a hill on the southern shore of Phewa Lake. It has four images of Buddha facing in four directions. The dome shaped pagoda is an impressive sight and its hilltop location commands a great view. It is a great vantage point which offers spectacular views of the Annapurna.

The Old Bazaar

A stark contrast to Lakeside Pokhara, the old Pokhara Bazaar is 4 km away from Phewa Lake. It is a traditional bazaar and a colorful gathering place for an ethnically diverse group of traders. The temples and monuments bear a close resemblance to the Newari architecture of Kathmandu Valley. Except for the large concrete buildings that have cropped up, the market place retains much of its original charm. It makes for a pleasant walk; there are shops selling anything from edibles and clothing to cosmetics and gold. The old bazaar is also home to one of Pokhara's most important shrines, the Brindhyabasini Mandir. Perched on a shady hillock, this white dome-like structure dominates a spacious stone-paved courtyard.

Museums

The Pokhara Museum is worth a visit. Located between the bus stop and Mahendra Pul, it showcases the ethnic mosaic of the diverse cultures that thrive in western Nepal. The lifestyles and history of the Gurungs, Thakalis and Tharus are attractively represented by models, photographs and artifacts. Of much interest and also a major attraction is the recently discovered remains of an 8000-year-old settlement in Mustang. Open daily from 10 am to 5 pm, except on Tuesdays and public holidays.

Another interesting museum in Pokhara is the Annapurna Regional Museum which is also known as the Natural History Museum. Run by the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP), the museum has an exceptional collection of butterflies, insects, birds and models of wildlife found in the area. Located at Prithvi Narayan Campus, east of the old bazaar, it is open daily from 9 am to 5 pm except on Saturdays and public holidays.

International Mountain Museum

The International Mountain Museum (IMM) has an impressive façade. It was built with the objective of recording, documenting, exhibiting and chronicling the entire past up to the present day, the development of mountain and mountaineering activities in the world. It has received much support from the many mountaineering clubs and associations as well as individual donors from around the world. The museum was established by Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) with the theme 'Man, Mountain and Mountain activities around the world'. Accordingly, the entire display area of the museum has been divided along the theme. The exhibition Halls are:

Hall of Mountain People: This hall exhibits the customs, traditions, heritage, culture and way of life of the mountain people.

Hall of World Mountains: This hall showcases all fourteen peaks over 8000 m. and displays geological facts related to the origin of world mountain systems. The hall also exhibits and explains the flora and fauna of the Himalaya. Another aspect of the museum is the focus on great personalities like Kumar Khadga Bikram Shah (founder president of NMA), Dr. Toni Hagen (Renowned geologist and lover of Nepal, who published the first pictorial "Nepal"), Reverend Ekai Kawaguchi (The first Japanese to visit Nepal in 1899), and Dr. Harka Gurung (Renowned scholar, geographer, development planner and first Tourism Minister of Nepal).

Hall of Mountain Activities: Highlighting historical ascents and explorations in and around the mountainous regions, this hall is dedicated to mountain activities such as mountaineering and trekking. Interestingly, it also showcases the development of climbing gears and other essential mountaineering equipment.

Surrounding Areas

Pokhara is where some of the most popular treks in the Annapurna region begin and end. Among them, the highly recommended treks are the intensive Annapurna Circuit and Jomsom Treks. For those with limited time on their hands, there are a number of short treks that are equally fascinating like the Sarankot, Naudanda, Ghandruk or Ghorepani treks. The Sarankot (1,592m) trek is popular for its bird's eye view of Pokhara and the spectacular panoramic view of mountains. It lies west of Pokhara and the hilltop was once the location of a Kaski Fort.

Things to do

Motor Biking

Nothing quite compares to the thrill of exploring the valley on a motorbike. With natural beauty abounding around Pokhara the ride is an adventure packed with thrills and excitement. The friendly locals make the trip delightful and one can venture anywhere in the unrestricted valley. All you need for a great time is a good bike and a reliable map.

Boating

Pokhara's Phewa Lake naturally draws visitors towards it. Easily the best means of recreation, boating is a favorite past time which one can indulge in according to whim any time of day. The second largest lake in Nepal, the Phewa measures approximately 1.5 by 4 km. Its eastern shore, also known as Lakeside or Baidam, is the center of tourist activity in Pokhara while the opposite bank remains pristine and uninhabited. The other two lakes, Begnas and Rupa Tal are located 15 km out of Pokhara at the end of a road that turns off the Kathmandu highway. Less visited but no less beautiful, both these lakes are excellent for boating and preferred by those seeking serenity and peace. A boat can be rented easily for a number of hours and one can head out to the middle of the lake or the other banks where there is much greenery and tranquility. Taking a swim on a warm sunny day can be the highlight of your stay in Pokhara. It is also possible to hire a boat for the day or on an hourly basis. An interesting option is to do away with the boatman and go on your own for a more adventurous time.

When it comes to choosing a time, the best time for boating in Pokhara is in the winter months between October and February, when the skies are clear and the mountains cast their shadows on the lake's tranquil waters.

Ultra-lights

Go up in an ultra-light aircraft and get a sweeping bird's eye view of the entire Pokhara Valley. It is an exhilarating ride that allows unhindered views of the mountains and the scenic lakes far below. Ultra-light flights are operated from Pokhara Airport beginning September through June. They can take off and land on a field or even a dirt road, and in areas where other planes fear to tread. With a limited capacity, it seats only two, a passenger and the pilot. Ultra-lights can fly for hours and ascend to a maximum height of 5000 meters.

Paragliding

Paragliding is perhaps the most rewarding of short duration adventure sports given the fact that there's nothing between you and the scenery unfolding before you. In the distance lie the majestic Himalayas and down below are the villages, monasteries, temples, lakes and jungles, a true bird's eye view and a fascinating one at that.

Fishing

For anglers, the lake has a special meaning; it could mean his/her biggest catch. Fishing rods can be rented from the shops around lakeside.

Golf

Pokhara has the space and climate suitable for golf and the sport was introduced here many years ago. There are two world class golf courses in Pokhara.

Pony Riding

Pony riding is a delightful way of getting around Pokhara. Rides are organized by operators for rides in the valley and the surrounding hills.

Rafting

Nepal's rivers rank high in the world of white water rafting and Pokhara is ideally situated for raft trips along its rivers. The most popular river for rafting is the Trishuli River, which flows along the Kathmandu-Pokhara highway. Equally good with plenty of exciting rapids are the Kali Gandaki and Seti rivers.

Short Hikes

Pokhara is the perfect place for relaxing before and after a trek, and for the avid trekkers, a respite between treks. But there is much to see around Pokhara as well and some yearn to explore the sights and sounds around Pokhara. The usual sightseeing tour lasts about 3-4 hours but can be extended by several hours to spend more time at places that hold special interest.

Mountain Biking

For those seeking a more physical challenge, mountain biking provides just the means as there is no better way to enjoy an exploratory trip in the urban centers of Nepal. Take to the countryside and there's endless possibilities leading to unlimited fun. Ride through lush green rice fields, delightful little hamlets, up and down the hills, along river banks, around temples, past the stray cattle, over suspension bridges and along the highway. Mountain bikes can be easily rent for the day or even longer from any of the numerous bicycle rental shops in and around the city. For a better understanding of the local culture, rhythm of village life and to visit the cool spots, take a guided trip.

Access (Getting there)

Pokhara is located roughly 200 km west of Kathmandu. Getting to your destination is the objective but even the journey between these two famed cities is part of the Pokhara experience. The easier and quicker means of reaching there is to fly out from Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) in Kathmandu. Flying on a clear day gives one the thrill of catching an incredible panoramic view of the snow-capped mountains that stretch from east to west of Nepal's boundary with Tibet. The changing landscape from the icy Himalaya in the north to the rich green Mahabharat range to the south and the sweltering sub-tropical jungles in the plains make this flight fascinating. There are daily flights and bus services between Kathmandu and Pokhara.

Accommodation

Pokhara offers a wide variety of accommodation and for all kinds of budgets. Luxury hotels are also available with beautiful views of the Himalayas. There are roughly four

accommodation areas around the Bus Park and Bazaar, by the airport, Damside (Pardi) and Lakeside (Baidam).

Climate

Pokhara enjoys mild tropical temperatures where the winters are not severe and the summers are not as sweltering as in the hot plains of the south. Given its proximity to the gigantic Annapurna massif, one would expect an extremely cold winter but their impact is minimal. Pokhara's at 827m, enjoys a favorable warm climate making it such a haven for tourists. During summers, the heat and humidity dominates life in the valley while winters are pleasant especially from October to December. Monsoon in Pokhara begins from early-June to September though rain may come sooner as pre-monsoon showers from April or May. The valley's maximum temperature can go up to 30-32 degree Celsius in the summer and a minimum of 6-degree Celsius during the winter. Days remain perennially warm through the seasons, except for some days during the monsoon and winter.

Adventure activities in Nepal

Whether you choose to balloon, bungee jump, canyon, ice-climb, rock climb, climb trekking peaks, fly over mountains or fly an ultralight, you will find an adventure everyday in Nepal.

The Himalayas have long since held a mysterious attraction to travelers and trekkers alike. In recent years, there has been a surge of extreme sports to the small Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal. Now, in this part of the world, you can experience some of the most physically and mentally challenging action sports in an exotic destination.

As if trekking, rafting/kayaking, biking and jungle safari are not enough, any adventure mentioned below will entice the ultimate adrenaline junkie.

Balloonning

Sail above the Kathmandu Valley and get your camera ready. There is a grand balloon with 20 person gondola. Your ballooning tour comes complete with a full course breakfast.

Bungee jumping

If you've always wanted to fly, you have come to the right spot. New to Nepal, this leap of faith will jumpstart an already growing adrenaline sport industry. Balance yourself on the 500ft suspension bridge nestled within the mountains, high above the river. Raw energy begins to flow through the wooden planks, then comes your six seconds of adrenaline.

After your flight, enjoy a relaxing stay in The Last Resort, in the remote areas of Nepal's Bote Kosi river. Activities include rest, relaxation, trekking, meditation in an ancient Parvati temple, and conversations with new friends at the Instant Karma bar.

Canyoning

The latest adrenaline cocktail of choice is canyoning, an activity that involves abseiling, sliding, jumping and climbing down canyon walls alongside waterfalls to deep pools below.

Swim into narrow passages, through powerful blasts of water and past, wild rock formations. This unique combination of skills gives you the freedom to explore some of the most ruggedly beautiful, yet forbidden places in the world.

Ice-climbing

Out of the world's 10 highest peaks, eight are found in Nepal, thus being the ideal setting for mountaineering, peak and ice-climbing.

The Himalayas, the world's most well known mountain playground in the world, is a place that every ice-climber should visit at least once in a lifetime. Demanding skills, extreme altitudes, jagged peaks, glaciers and icefalls, heightens your senses, giving you an exhilarating and powerful experience.

Rock climbing The growing Himalayas will also tempt those that want to be tethered to them - or do you want to free climb? Whatever your pleasure, these young mountains are sure to offer enough finger-clinging holds to give a lifetime of memories. Most trekking outfitters offer all the gear you'll need for mountaineering. But for more specific climbing needs, consider coming loaded with your own gear.

Mountaineering

Nepal is a country well known for its Himalaya mountains. Among the 10 highest peaks in the world, eight, including the highest peak Mt. Everest, crown this country. Nothing on earth can beat the exhilaration of scaling them. No wonder Nepal is the favorite destination for mountaineers and every year more than 500 expeditions trudge up the Himalaya.

seasons

There are four seasons for mountaineering in Nepal: spring (March-May), summer (June-August), autumn (September-November) and winter (December-February). A total of 153 Himalayan peaks are open to mountaineers. Climbing permits are issued by the Ministry of Tourism & Civil Aviation (MoTCA) for 135 peaks known as mountaineering peaks, and by the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) for 18 smaller peaks, known as trekking peaks, which range from 5,587 to 6,654 m in altitude.

fee

A royalty (climbing fee) ranging from US\$ 1,500 to US\$ 10,000 (according to the altitude of the peak) and US\$ 70,000 for Everest is charged by MoTCA for a group of seven persons. An additional US\$ 200 to US\$ 1,500 per person (US\$ 10,000 per person for Everest) will be charged if the group exceeds seven persons.

The full amount of the royalty has to be paid within two months of the date of issue of the permit, otherwise it may be canceled. The royalty must be paid directly to MoTCA either by bank draft or bank transfer payable in convertible foreign currency only.

For trekking peaks, a royalty of US\$ 300 or US\$ 150 is charged by NMA. The permit is valid for a period of one month for a group of up to 10 persons. An additional amount of US\$ 7.50 per person is charged if the group exceeds 10 persons.

Expeditions

Mt. Everest and other numerous peaks have been climbed many times now. Tenzing Norgé Sherpa (pictured in banner above) and Edmund Hillary reached the top of the world in 1953. Hillary stated "Nepal is one of the world's great paradises and one of the nicest countries in the world for trekking."

The Nepal Government is also taking interest to open new and restricted trekking areas and virgin peaks for the summit attempts. Many trekkers and climbers are excited to visit Nepal and test their endurance behind the other great climbers in history. Peaks for the mountaineering are categorized by height, area and royalty.

See VisitNepal.com's [Trekking Peaks](#) for current challenges available. For complete details about Mountaineering and Expeditions, visit our sponsor [Adventure Thirdpole Treks and Expeditions](#).

Mountain flight

Airplane

For those who are restricted by time or other considerations from going trekking, there are mountain flights that offer a panoramic encounter with the highest peaks on earth. The plane departs from Kathmandu and flies alongside the Himalaya to give you eye-level views of the snow peaks and then brings you back in one hour. Cruising close to the awesome massifs of rock and ice, the flight presents a mind-boggling sight.

Helicopter

In Nepal, going to remote corners of the Himalaya by helicopter is guaranteed to be an exciting activity. Since the whirlybird needs only a small landing space, it can be hired to take tourists to whichever destination and at whatever time they want to go. Of course, amazing mountain views are just one part of the ticket.

Ultra-light flying

A new era of recreational aviation has landed in Nepal. Discover the magic of this simple, elemental, pure flight. Feel the wind in your face, observe clear, unobstructed views and explore the stunning landscapes, surrounded by a backdrop of lofty mountain peaks.

Trekking in Nepal

Nepal Trekking is one long-term activity that draws repeat visitors to the country. Therefore, Nepal is the ultimate destination for the trekking enthusiast. Nepal offers a myriad of possibilities from the short and easy walking excursions to the demanding and strenuous challenges of the snowy peaks (mountain) and their foothills and valleys. But however easy or moderate, or strenuous, there is something for every palate that goes with trekking in Nepal's hills, mountains and hinterlands, the most rewarding way to experience Nepal's indomitable combination of natural beauty and cultural riches is to walk through the length, breadth and the altitudes of Nepal. Trekking in Nepal Himalaya is as much a unique cultural experience as well as an ultimate Himalayan adventure. You will share the trail with many pack animals and hard working porters who carry heavy load of supplies, much of which is consumed by trekkers.

Trekking regions in Nepal

Everest Trekking

Everest Trekking Nepal is located the eastern part of Nepal and this is most famous trekking routes of Nepal. These treks on the Everest Region Trekking will take you through a nostalgic route of historic importance followed by the famous Expeditions of the fifties and sixties. These most popular and famous trek not only brings you closer to the highest mountain (Mt. Everest) on earth, but also to the equally famous sherpa and their culture and religion. No wonder this is regarded as the Mecca to all trekkers and mountaineers of the world.

Everest Region Trekking

- Everest Base Camp Trek
- Everest Base Camp - Chola Pass - Gokyo Trek
- Gokyo Lake Trekking
- Amadablam Base Camp Trek
- Mani Rimdu Festival Trek
- Everest Base Camp and Island Peak
- Easy Everest and Annapurna Trek
- Everest Panorama Trek
- Three High Passes Trek

Annapurna Trekking

Annapurna Trekking Nepal is situated western part of Nepal offer the most popular Route for Trekking Tour adventures. For this Region both entry and out points is Pokhara, which is second largest city of Nepal. Pokhara is situated 200km from kathmandu and which is very famous for beautiful lakes with panoramic views of Annapurna Himalayan ranges. Fewa lake is its main attraction in Pokhara. The trekking routes in this Area do cover some of the most beautiful villages and offer some of the finest mountain views in Nepal. You will find different ethnic groups and cultural diversity in this region.

Annapurna Region Trekking

- Annapurna Circuit Trek
- Annapurna Base Camp Trek
- Tilicho Lake Trek
- Ghorepani(Poonhill) Trek
- Ghorepani and Chitwan Jungle Safari
- Annapurna Panorama Trek
- Khair Trekking

Langtang region

The Langtang region Trekking lies in the north of the Kathmandu city. The Langtang valley runs west to east below the southern flanks and glaciers of langtang lirung(7245m), which separates this high alpine valley from the Tibetan plateau to the north. Sherpa farmers inhabit this and the Helambu area lying to the south beyond and below the sacred lakes of Gosainkunda. Easily accessible from Kathmandu we consider the treks in this area to be amongst the most underrated in Nepal. Marvelous autumn trekking with fine mountain views, and one of the best areas for spring flowers and bird-life. Although Langtang valley can be very cold in January-february with the Gosainkunda pass closed, Helambu is temperate year-round and offers good possibilities for short treks into sherpa villages.

Langtang Region Trekking

- Langtang Valley Trekking
- Langtang - Ganja La pass Trek
- Langtang - Gosainkunda Trek
- Helambu Trekking

Remote Area Trekking

For the extremely adventurous traveler, Asian Journey Trekking organizes treks in remote and wild areas of Nepal. These treks will give you the opportunity to experience mountains and cultures that very few others have had the fortune of having a look at. All these treks require the carrying of camping and cooking equipment because they're only a few lodges or teahouses existing on these routes. Our years of experience, at this sort of thing, have helped us locate the best spots to camp on providing you with the most spectacular views. We operate your wilderness treks unlike any other trekking agency in town giving you the best value for your money.

Remote and Less Travel Area Trekking

- Manaslu Trekking
- Upper Mustang Trek
- Mutang Tiji Festival Trek
- Kanchenjunga Base Camp Trek
- Makalu Base Camp Trek
- Arun valley Trek
- Ganesh Himal Trek
- Dhaulagiri Circuit Trek
- Upper Dolpo Trek
- Panch Pokhari Trek

Reference

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- www.google.com
- www.naturallynepal.com
- Lonely Planet

